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## North Carolina Legislators: Role-Orientations and Socialization

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NORTH CAROLINA LEGISLATORS:  
" "  
ROLE-ORIENTATIONS AND SOCIALIZATION

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A Thesis  
Presented to  
The Faculty of the Department of Government  
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts

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by  
Donald Pergerson  
1976

APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of

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## PREFACE

The study to be presented has two main purposes. It will compare the political background and representational-role orientations of North Carolina legislators with the political background and representational-role orientations of legislators from California, New Jersey, Ohio, and Tennessee. The information on the latter four states was found in The Legislative System: Explorations in Legislative Behavior by John C. Wahlke, Heinz Eulau, William Buchanan, and Leroy C. Ferguson. Secondly, the information gathered on political backgrounds and representational-role orientations will be examined in light of information related to empirical democratic theory and voting behavior research.

The study should be done for two reasons. First, it will more closely parallel the work of Wahlke and his associates in The Legislative System: Explorations in Legislative Behavior than do other studies which contradict their findings. Secondly, it will provide a more recent study which will allow us to determine if the Wahlke study and voting behavior studies are time-bound.

I became interested in doing this study while working on a class project concerning state and local government. I found that Wahlke and his associates reported that

legislators in California, New Jersey, Ohio, and Tennessee were predominantly trustees. Also, they reported that many of these state legislators were politically socialized at an early age and were subject to primary group influences. This study will examine North Carolina legislators to see if the Wahlke findings are valid for them.

The study will not attempt to correlate the political background of legislators with the perceived representational-role orientations of legislators. A correlation of that nature is beyond the boundaries of this study. The study will, however, strive to demonstrate that legislators are political elites. Voting behavior research and empirical democratic theory will be examined in order to learn more about legislative elites and their constituents.

I wish to express my appreciation to Dr. Donald J. Baxter for reading and for offering valuable criticisms of my preliminary draft and to Elizabeth Pendergrass for typing the preliminary and the final draft.

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to compare the political background and representational-role orientations of a random sample of North Carolina legislators with the political background and representational-role orientations of legislators from California, New Jersey, Ohio, and Tennessee.

A mail questionnaire was adopted from The Legislative System: Explorations in Legislative Behavior to determine factors significant in a legislator's political socialization and to identify perceived representational-role orientations of legislators.

A difference was observed in the predominance of representational-role orientations between North Carolina legislators and legislators from the other four states. However, the factors significant in political socialization were basically congruent from state to state.

It is suggested that the difference in representational-role orientations is caused by an increase in ideological awareness among the electorate.

The study predicts that an increase in ideological awareness among voters will add credence to the political parties model and the electoral accountability model of policy linkage. Also, political polarization and the demise of the two-party system in the United States could occur as ideological awareness increases.



NORTH CAROLINA LEGISLATORS:  
ROLE-ORIENTATIONS AND SOCIALIZATION

## INTRODUCTION

The study will examine whether legislators from North Carolina, California, New Jersey, Ohio, and Tennessee perceive themselves to be trustees, delegates, or politicians. Also, four dimensions of political socialization will be examined. The four dimensions to be viewed are: [1] the agent of political socialization; [2] the time of the legislators' political socialization; [3] the types of participation which are most likely to result in political socialization; and, [4] the personal predispositions related to political socialization.

An underlying assumption of the study is that the perceived representational-role orientation of a majority of state legislators and the factors relating to their socialization will suggest that a majority of these representatives are political elites. Another assumption is that the book entitled The Legislative System: Explorations in Legislative Behavior which examined legislators in California, New Jersey, Ohio, and Tennessee is time-bound. A third assumption is that voting behavior research is time-bound.

This study, by relying upon recent voting research, will suggest that voters are now more ideological than they were in 1962 when The Legislative System: Explorations in

Legislative Behavior was published. Therefore, it is assumed that although the majority of North Carolina legislators will be political elites, many will partially acquiesce to pressures brought by informed citizens. They will not adopt the trustee role as often as did the legislators in the Wahlke study.

Wahlke suggested that a majority of legislators in the four states that he and his cohorts examined were trustees because the voters were too ignorant to supply their representatives with instructions. Thus, the first chapter of this study will explore early voting behavior research that supports the Wahlke findings. Also, more recent voting research which contradicts the findings of Wahlke and his colleagues will be examined. Chapter two will relate the methods used in the study of North Carolina legislators for determining facts relating to political socialization and for determining representational-role orientations. Also, the method of gathering the sample of respondents will be reported. Chapter three will report the findings on North Carolina legislators regarding representational-role orientations and factors affecting political socialization. Chapter four will compare North Carolina legislators with legislators in California, New Jersey, Ohio, and Tennessee. Comparisons will be made concerning representational-role orientations and concerning the four dimensions of political socialization previously mentioned. It will suggest that the differences in the studies are possibly due to the span of

time between the studies. Chapter five will examine the implications that the new findings of the North Carolina study have for democratic theory. Lastly, chapter six will summarize the entire study.

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE BACKGROUND: ROLES, BEHAVIOR, AND THEORY

There are four major subdivisions in this chapter. The first subdivision will examine the legislator who perceives himself to be a trustee. Wahlke, Eulau, Buchanan, and Ferguson hypothesized that most legislators in California, New Jersey, Ohio, and Tennessee were trustees because voters were too ignorant to send instructions to their representatives. A trustee was defined as a legislator who follows his conscience in decision-making behavior. He sees himself as a free agent. The hypothesis of Wahlke and his associates will be examined with regards to voting behavior research and empirical democratic theory.

The second subdivision will examine the legislator who perceives himself to be a delegate. Here, we will explore information provided by Frank J. Sorauf, Gerald M. Pomper, and others. This section will attempt to dispel the notion that voters are not capable of sending instructions to their constituents and will suggest that voters are able to perceive ideological differences in political parties when they do exist.

The third subdivision of the chapter will focus on legislators who perceive themselves to be politicians.

Reasons will be offered to explain why some legislators adopt what is considered a very demanding strategy. The work of Roger H. Davidson in The Role of the Congressman will be reported.

The fourth subdivision of chapter one will illustrate how the factors affecting political socialization are congruent with many legislators becoming political elites. Also, it will show that many voters belong to an elite subset of constituents. In a later chapter, we will note that the subset may be increasing in members.

### The Trustee

In 1962, John C. Wahlke, Heinz Eulau, William Buchanan, and Leroy C. Ferguson wrote The Legislative System: Explorations in Legislative Behavior which was the ground breaking study and, indeed, became the most respected study of legislative representational-role orientations. It provided data on legislators from California, New Jersey, Ohio, and Tennessee. The authors identified three types of representational-role orientations. Legislators who followed the dictates of their conscience in decision-making were called trustees. Those legislators who followed instructions from their constituents or others in decision-making were called delegates while those who exhibited both trustee and delegate orientations either serially or simultaneously were called politicians.

Wahlke and his colleagues found the trustee role to

be predominant among legislators in California, New Jersey, Ohio, and Tennessee. The researchers suggested that representatives adopt the trustee role because constituents are unable to adequately inform themselves on intricate and obscure governmental issues.<sup>1</sup> This conclusion is supported by voting research. Generally, voters have been found to have limited interest in politics, to have a strong sense of party identification, and to lack ideological coherence on policy issues. In The American Voter, party identification was found to have little relation to general ideology.<sup>2</sup>

Findings similar to those of The American Voter prompted Bernard R. Berelson to state that many requirements previously assumed necessary for a democracy were not essential. Previously, it had been assumed that prerequisites for a democratic citizenry included: [1] interest, discussion, motivation; [2] knowledge; [3] principle; and, [4] rationality. Since empirical research revealed that the "average" citizen did not meet these requirements, Berelson claimed that democracy survived not because of properties of individuals but because of collective properties that reside in the electorate as an

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<sup>1</sup>John C. Wahlke, Heinz Eulau, William Buchanan, and Leroy C. Ferguson, The Legislative System: Explorations in Legislative Behavior [New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1962], pp. 272-280.

<sup>2</sup>Campbell, Philip Converse, Warren Miller, and Donald Stokes, The American Voter [New York: Wiley, 1960], p. 125.

entity. Berelson equated low interest in politics by many voters with consensus.<sup>3</sup> Thus, he was not alarmed by a study done by Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba which reported that only 27 percent of the American respondents in their sample regularly followed accounts of political and governmental affairs.<sup>4</sup> Another study conducted by John P. Robinson, Jerrold G. Rusk, and Kendra B. Head revealed that few political activities other than voting attracted the typical American.<sup>5</sup>

The information presented strongly suggests why Wahlke and his associates found a predominance of trustees. If the large majority of American people are not interested in politics and are not informed about issues, it is not rational to expect them to supply state legislators with instructions for decision-making. However, more recent voting behavior research studies are detecting a change in the electorate. We will examine this change in the next subdivision.

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<sup>3</sup>Bernard R. Berelson, Paul F. Lazarsfeld and William N. McPhee, Voting [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954], pp. 307-311.

<sup>4</sup>Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963], p. 89.

<sup>5</sup>John P. Robinson, Jerrold G. Rusk, and Kendra B. Head, Measures of Political Attitudes [Ann Arbor: Survey Research Center, 1968], p. 591.



### The Delegate

Frank J. Sorauf in a study similar but not parallel to the Wahlke study found that Pennsylvania state legislators predominantly adopted the delegate role. He gathered no evidence to support the proposition that representatives adopt the trustee role because constituents are unable to understand governmental issues in a complex world. Legislators in Pennsylvania were very concerned about the power of the constituency.<sup>6</sup>

Sorauf found that only 31.1 percent of the legislative candidates in Pennsylvania adopted the trustee role if it conflicted with the desires of the voters. Of the Republican legislators, 42.3 percent perceived themselves to be delegates while 25 percent adopted the trustee role. On the Democratic side, 35.2 percent of the legislators adopted the delegate role while 40.7 percent adopted the trustee role. Sorauf discovered a similar pattern among defeated candidates. Of the defeated Republicans, 38.9 percent professed the delegate role while 24.1 percent adopted the trustee role. Of the defeated Democrats, 30.8 percent said they were delegates while 34.6 percent adopted the trustee role.<sup>7</sup>

Sorauf offered two explanations for his findings.

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<sup>6</sup>Frank J. Sorauf, Party and Representation [New York: Atherton Press, 1962], pp. 122-123.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 129.

A representative is united with his constituents in Pennsylvania by localism. Hence, errands and patronage jobs are valuable assets in securing re-election. Secondly, Sorauf surmised that since party discipline was stronger among Democrats than Republicans in Pennsylvania one could assume that the Democrats chose the trustee role to hide party commitments. Sorauf emphasized that he gathered no evidence to support the proposition that representatives adopt the trustee role because voters are ignorant.<sup>8</sup>

Gerald M. Pomper gathered more evidence to show that some voters are capable of supplying representatives with instructions. Pomper stated that the findings of empirical voting research are often distorted. To support this statement, he mentioned that Norman R. Luttbeg found considerable constraint or coherence in mass attitudes. Pomper suggested that The American Voter may be time-bound. He mentioned that a low amount of ideology among voters in 1956, reported by The American Voter, possibly was discovered because that election did not stimulate ideological feelings.<sup>9</sup>

J. O. Field and R. E. Anderson replicated the 1956 Michigan study in the 1964 presidential election in

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 129.

<sup>9</sup>Gerald M. Pomper, "From Confusion to Clarity: Issues and American Voters, 1956-1968," American Political Science Review, Vol. LXVI, June, 1972, pp. 415-428.

which ideology was emphasized. These researchers reported a substantial increase in ideological awareness. Of the respondents, one-third were classified as ideological. The figure is more than double the proportion of 1956 voters who were classified as ideological.<sup>10</sup>

Pomper concluded from the Field and Anderson study that the 1964 campaign was a critical election because it marked the beginning of a political era in the United States signifying increased voter awareness of policy issues. He stated people can perceive party differences when they are present. Lastly, Pomper stated that consensus has been disrupted.<sup>11</sup>

The absence of consensus in our society does not correspond with Berelson's democratic theory. Berelson correlated low interest in politics by the electorate with consensus. Consensus was correlated with stability. Other theorist disagreed with the idea that consensus is a prerequisite of democracy. Empirical democratic theorist have noted that ideological sophistication and the acceptance of democratic values are increasing in the United States. This is associated

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<sup>10</sup>J. O. Field and R. E. Anderson, "Ideology in the Public's Conceptualization of the 1964 Election," Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. XXXIII, Fall, 1969, pp. 380-398.

<sup>11</sup>Pomper, "From Confusion to Clarity," pp. 415-428.

with a corresponding rise in political articulates.<sup>12</sup>  
 The factors responsible for the increase in articulate-  
 ness included: [1] education, [2] social mobility,  
 [3] urbanization, [4] the mass media and so forth.<sup>13</sup>

The information which has been presented suggests that a change is occurring in the American electorate. The Survey Research Center reported that issues were very significant in the 1972 presidential election. This is indicative of an increase in ideological awareness among voters.<sup>14</sup> If these voting trends continue, it is reasonable to assume that less legislators will be willing to adopt the trustee role. A mass electorate possessing sophisticated public opinions would undoubtedly expect legislators to be attentive to their policy preferences.

### The Politico

Of course, it would be absurd to expect all American voters to immediately transform themselves into ideologues. The shift will be gradual. Similarly, we should not expect all legislators to immediately forego the trustee role for the delegate role. In the early stages of voters developing ideological awareness,

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<sup>12</sup>Charles F. Cnudde and Deane E. Neubauer, eds., Empirical Democratic Theory [Chicago: Markham Publishing Company, 1969], p. 286.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 294.

<sup>14</sup>Arthur Miller, et. al., "A Majority Party in Disarray: Policy Polarization in the 1972 Election," [Ann Arbor: Survey Research Center].

there could be a shift from the trustee role to the politico role. Legislators responding to the change in voters by shifting their representational-role orientations would signify a new element in American politics. As a majority of voters develop sophisticated public opinions, one might expect a shift from the politico role to the delegate role.

There is evidence which shows that a legislative shift is possibly occurring. It will be recalled that the Wahlke study, which was published in 1962, found the trustee role to be predominant among legislators in California, New Jersey, Ohio, and Tennessee. However, Roger H. Davidson in his book, The Role of the Congressman, reported from a study of representational styles among eighty-seven members of the United States House of Representatives that the politico role was predominant. ~~This finding appeared unusual because~~ Davidson asserted that almost by definition the politico role is a more demanding strategy than either the delegate role or the trustee role.<sup>15</sup> However, the legislators in the Davidson study appeared to have developed inhibitions about completely ignoring constituent instructions. It is interesting to note that this study was published in 1969. Thus, it is plausible to assume that a shift to ideological awareness among some voters

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<sup>15</sup>Roger H. Davidson, The Role of the Congressman [New York: Pegasus, 1969], pp. 117-119.

since 1962 could be partially responsible for a predominance of politicians in the Davidson study.

### Class Difference

It is important to note that only some voters are becoming more ideological. In this subdivision, we will examine the notion that ideological voters belong to an elite subset of constituents and the notion that factors affecting political socialization tend to produce elite legislators.

Robert E. Lane provided information which suggests that an elite subset of voters may be comprised by members of the upper-class. Lane reported: [1] the relation of public policy to stakes at issue is made more visible to upper-status persons by the mass media; [2] lower-class child rearing practices do not encourage self-assertive social participation; [3] higher-class status fosters civic responsibility; [4] lower-class persons are subjected to greater cross-pressures; and, [5] lower-class persons are alienated from existing norms and values.<sup>16</sup>

Also, William Buchanan gathered data revealing that voters tended to be higher in socioeconomic status than nonvoters and tended to be more active than nonvoters in other forms of civic participation including voluntary associations. "Purposive voters" were the most active

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<sup>16</sup>Robert E. Lane, Political Life: Why People Get Involved in Politics [New York: Free Press, 1959], pp. 158-161, 220-234.

in all forms of civic activity. "Purposive voters" were defined as those who perceived voting as a means of influencing policy. These voters were persons of highest socioeconomic status and were community leaders participating most actively in voluntary associations, church groups, and business and professional organizations.<sup>17</sup>

It seems logical to assert that if "purposive voters" are elites, then, the representatives themselves will be elites. In a later chapter, it will be reported that most legislators in the Wahlke study and in the North Carolina study were socialized early in life. Thus, the factors affecting political socialization are congruent with the development of legislative elites. For instance, Kornberg and Thomas found that the family tends to be the main socializing agent for those who were socialized in childhood. On the other hand, legislators who were socialized in adolescence cite themselves as the agent while external events and conditions were mentioned as the main socializing agent by those who recall being socialized in adulthood. Also, these researchers discovered that legislators who had fathers with a high-status occupation were more likely to be socialized early in life. The data of Kornberg and Thomas stated that 91 percent of the legislators who had fathers with

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<sup>17</sup>William Buchanan, "An Inquiry Into Purposive Voting," Journal of Politics, Vol. XVIII, May, 1956, pp. 281-295.

a low-status occupation were socialized later in life.<sup>18</sup>

A study by Herbert Hirsch revealed findings similar to the ones reported by Kornberg and Thomas. Primary groups, ie., family and friends, were the main socializing agent for those who were socialized in early childhood while "other groups" were cited as the main socializing agent for those socialized after childhood.<sup>19</sup> The label "other groups" included: educational groups, political groups, civic or community groups, and occupational groups.

The relationship that Hirsch found between the time of socialization and the occupational-status of the father was not nearly as strong as that found by Kornberg and Thomas. According to Hirsch, the difference was probably due to the presence of Canadian legislators in the Kornberg and Thomas study. Using only the American portion of their sample, 41 percent of the legislators who were socialized early in life had fathers with a high-status occupation. Hirsch's data showed that 43 percent of the legislators who were socialized early in life had fathers with a high-status

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<sup>18</sup>Allan Kornberg and Norman Thomas, "The Political Socialization of National Legislative Elites in the United States and Canada," Journal of Politics, Vol. 27, November, 1965, pp. 761-775.

<sup>19</sup>Herbert Hirsch and M. Donald Hancock, Comparative Legislative Systems [New York: The Free Press, 1971], pp. 100-101.



occupation.<sup>20</sup>

Since it appears there is an interrelation between the agent of political socialization and the time of socialization, it is plausible to assume that the conditions under which the agent is acting will also be related to the time of socialization. Bronfenbrenner did a study which showed that rural families lagged behind the times in caring for their infants because they were isolated from the mass media and other agents of change. If this lag extends to political socialization, legislators from rural backgrounds will be socialized at a later time than those from urban areas. This assumption was partially confirmed. Rural and small town residents are isolated from political stimuli which causes lower political interest. This is transmitted to the child, and he becomes politically socialized later in life.<sup>21</sup>

In summary, the research we have discussed makes it clear that articulate voters and legislators are political elites. However, there are indications that issue voting may spread to the great majority of voters in the future. If this occurs, representatives may be pressured by the electorate to disdain the trustee role. In the meantime, we should be watching for gradual

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., pp. 102-103.

<sup>21</sup>Urie Bronfenbrenner, "Socialization and Social Class Through Time and Space," in Harold Proshansky and Bernard Seidenberg, eds., Basic Studies in Social Psychology [New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965] p. 358.

changes. As voters slowly grow more ideological, it would not be surprising to observe the majority of representatives forego the trustee role for the politico role. Later, if the majority of voters become ideologues, legislators might forego the politico role for the delegate role.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE METHODS USED IN THE STUDY OF NORTH CAROLINA LEGISLATORS

Chapter two is divided into three major subdivisions. The first subdivision will identify the two hypotheses under study and will mention why they are assumed to be correct. The second subdivision will review the definitions adopted for the study of North Carolina legislators and will examine the factors of socialization used as indicators of political elitism among state legislators. In the third subdivision, the questionnaire that was used to determine representational-role orientations and to identify important factors of political socialization will be examined.

#### Hypotheses

From the information presented in chapter one, it is reasonable to assume that most North Carolina legislators are political elites. Hence, one hypothesis of this study is that a majority of North Carolina legislators have elite political backgrounds. If this is true, it would seem reasonable to hypothesize that legislators will predominantly adopt the trustee role. This assumption is based on the findings of Wahlke and his cohorts

who studied legislators from California, New Jersey, Ohio, and Tennessee. Yet, we should not forget the trend toward ideological voting that we examined in chapter one nor should we forget that Roger H. Davidson found the politico role to be predominant among eighty-seven members of the United States House of Representatives in 1969. Therefore, the second hypothesis of this study is that most North Carolina legislators will perceive themselves to be politicians.

#### Definitions and Indicators Used in This Study

John Wahlke, Heinz Eulau, William Buchanan, and Leroy Ferguson defined three representational-role orientations in The Legislative System: Explorations in Legislative Behavior. A politico was defined as a legislator who plays the role of the trustee and delegate simultaneously or one after another as legislative decisions dictate. A delegate was defined as a legislator who feels he should follow the wishes of his constituents even if they are contrary to his own. Lastly, a trustee was defined as a legislator who sees himself as a free agent in that as a premise of his decision-making behavior, he claims to follow what he considers to be right or just, his convictions and principles, the dictates of his conscience.

The four dimensions of political socialization that were previously mentioned will be used as indicators of elitism among state legislators. It will be recalled that the four dimensions of political social-

ization are: [1] the agent of political socialization; [2] the time of the legislators' political socialization; [3] the types of participation which are most likely to result in political socialization; and, [4] the personal predispositions related to political socialization. Using these categories, the following factors relating to the political socialization of legislators will be considered as indicators of elitism: [1] a legislator mentioning primary groups as a very important agent in his political socialization; [2] a legislator stating he was politically socialized in grammar school or high school; [3] a legislator citing activity in civic and community work, general political work, school politics, party work, and occupational and professional groups as important agents in his political socialization; and, [4] a legislator describing long interest and a feeling of a general sense of obligation as important factors in his political socialization.

Having mentioned the four dimensions of political socialization, one is immediately brought to other terms that need defining. Political socialization was defined as the process by which political interest is acquired. Political interest was defined as the development of interest in reading newspapers and/or discussing politics with friends. As has just been mentioned, the time that a legislator is socialized is an important indicator of political elitism. Early age, middle age, and late age were the categories devised to

indicate an approximate time of political socialization. Early age was defined as the time one attends grammar school. Middle age was defined as the time one attends high school while late age was defined as the time after one graduates from high school. As was mentioned earlier, the time of socialization is related to the agent. Primary groups are important agents of socialization. They were defined as family members and friends. Family members were described as brothers, sisters, mother, father, uncles, aunts, cousins, neices, and nephews.

### The Questionnaire

Since this study is intended to be parallel with the Wahlke study, the same questionnaire that he and his colleagues used in The Legislative System: Explorations in Legislative Behavior will be adopted for this study. The purpose of the questionnaire was to determine the representational-role orientation of legislators and to identify the most important factors affecting the political socialization of legislators. Two open-ended questions were used to discover the representational-role orientations of state legislators. One question asked the legislator how he would describe the job of being a legislator and what he considered the most important things he did as a legislator. The second question asked legislators if there were any important differences between what they thought the job was and the

way their constituents saw it.

In order to identify the factors most important in the political socialization of legislators, representatives were asked to respond to a series of close-ended questions. In total, twenty-three factors were considered as possible agents of political socialization.

These factors were: [1] family members who hold or held political office; [2] family members who have been active or are active in politics; [3] family members interested in politics; [4] friends or associates who are active or interested in politics; [5] age at which one began reading political news; [6] age at which one began discussing politics; [7] activity in school politics; [8] study of politics in school by self; [9] general political work such as campaign meetings; [10] party work; [11] civic or community work; [12] activity in occupational or professional groups; [13] activity in ethnic or religious groups; [14] legislative lobbying; [15] politically related job; [16] long interest in politics; [17] ambition for political power; [18] admiration for politicians; [19] indignation; [20] general sense of obligation; [21] sense of obligation to special groups; [22] desire for sociability; and [23] physical handicaps.

It should be noted that the first four factors were used to determine the importance of primary groups on political socialization. Factors five and six were used to determine the time of the legislators' political

socialization. Factors seven through fifteen were used to determine the types of participation which are most likely to result in political socialization. Factors sixteen through twenty-three were used to determine the types of personal predispositions most relevant to a legislator becoming politically socialized.

The questionnaire was mailed to a random sample of one hundred North Carolina legislators chosen from a complete list of North Carolina legislators provided by the North Carolina Legislative Services Office. Fifty of these legislators responded to the questionnaire. The unusually high rate of response was probably attributable to the fact that only two open-ended questions were used. The twenty-three factors affecting political socialization were listed, and legislators merely had to check those that applied to them. Legislators were assured that no names would be used in the thesis.<sup>1</sup>

Now, we are ready to examine the findings of this study. The study should reveal a majority of North Carolina legislators with elite political backgrounds and should show that most North Carolina legislators are politicians.

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<sup>1</sup>See appendix, p. 61.



## CHAPTER THREE

### NORTH CAROLINA LEGISLATORS

There are three subdivisions in chapter three. The first subdivision will analyze representational-role orientations among North Carolina legislators. The various reasons that legislators had for adopting these roles will be examined. Also, the representational-role orientation predominant among legislators in North Carolina will be identified. Three reasons will be offered to explain why this role was predominant. The second subdivision will examine the political socialization of North Carolina legislators. Emphasis will be placed on the four dimensions of political socialization previously mentioned. The third subdivision will discuss whether the hypotheses previously mentioned were or were not true.

#### Representational-Role Orientations

As we know, three representational-role orientations were identified in The Legislative System: Explorations in Legislative Behavior. It was discovered that legislators adopted the roles of trustee, delegate, and politico for various reasons. For instance, some legislators were identified as moralistic

trustees. In North Carolina, two moralistic trustees were found. A moralistic trustee was a legislator who followed his own judgements in decision-making because he considered others untrustworthy. Thus, one of the moralistic trustees in North Carolina stated:

The most important function of a legislator is to try to make legislation bend toward the public good and not be swayed by lobbyists or private corporations.

A second moralistic trustee said:

I believe that my position is one of leadership, in that, I would vote based on the best facts available and upon principle. The legislator should help the understanding back home where selfish interests may be prevalent.

However, the majority of legislators in North Carolina who adopted the trustee role did not do so for moralistic reasons. Instead, they thought that most constituents were not adequately informed on political issues. Hence, these legislators reasoned it would be unwise to follow constituent instructions. In accord with this, one legislator said:

The most important thing I do as a legislator is to stay informed. Often the total picture is complicated, and I think the legislator should interpret that and help the understanding back home.

Just as the trustee role was assumed for various reasons, the delegate role was adopted for different reasons. For instance, one delegate responded that he thought his job was to discover what his constituents thought of legislation and to vote according to their wishes. Another delegate wrote that the majority

should rule. He considered it his primary responsibility to vote according to the way the majority of his constituents wanted him to vote although he might not always agree with them.

Lastly, politicians had varying conceptions of their roles. A politician who adopted a serial conception of his role could have thought of himself as being a delegate in matters of local interest and a trustee in all other matters. A legislator noted there was usually no disagreement with his constituents on local matters, but there were constituents who failed to realize the responsibility of looking at state-wide matters. A politician playing his role simultaneously attempted to balance the trustee role and the delegate role. A legislator playing this role said:

It is very important for a legislator to mesh together the divergent ideas of his constituents with the way he feels. - The most important thing I do as a legislator is stay informed.

North Carolina legislators had several reasons for adopting particular representational-role orientations. Now, the study will discuss which representational-role orientations were most predominant.

Most legislators in North Carolina perceived themselves to be politicians. The second most often adopted role was the trustee role while the delegate role was the least often adopted. Three reasons can be offered to explain the predominance of politicians in North Carolina. Remember, Roger Davidson asserted that

the politico role was more demanding than either of the pure styles. The task of trying to balance the trustee role against the delegate role was a very demanding strategy. However, it does not necessarily follow that most legislators will forego the politico role. A reason for adopting the politico role may be that it is the most gratifying. Accordingly, one politico wrote:

It is fulfilling when one can sometimes do what his constituents wish, but it is also important to not allow your constituents to narrow your perspective on issues affecting the entire state.

A second reason legislators adopted the politico role was implied by the quote just presented. Many legislators might trust the judgements of their constituents on local matters but not on matters affecting the entire state. Hence, they adopted a serial orientation to the politico role. A third reason legislators adopted the politico role was because of the new ideological awakening among voters. A legislator wrote:

Recently, I have learned that there are differences between my constituents and me on certain matters. I am getting more mail than I got in the past.

Next, the study will examine the factors affecting the political socialization of North Carolina legislators. Political socialization has been defined as the process by which political interest is acquired.

### Political Socialization

It was mentioned earlier in this study that four dimensions of socialization encompassing twenty-three

factors were considered as possible agents of political socialization. The first dimension of political socialization was the agent of socialization. The study discovered that primary groups acted as an important agent of political socialization for North Carolina legislators. Family members along with friends and associates were considered as primary groups. From a random sample of fifty North Carolina legislators, the study found that 40 percent of the legislators had relatives or members in their immediate family who held or hold political office; 58 percent of the legislators had relatives or members in their immediate family who have been or are active in politics; 72 percent had relatives or members in their immediate family who are interested in politics; and, 96 percent of the legislators had friends or associates who are or were active in politics, or who are interested in politics. Table 1 on page 30 illustrates these facts.

A second dimension of political socialization examined was the time of the legislators' political socialization. Thirty-nine percent of the North Carolina legislators reported that they were of high school age when they began reading political news in the newspapers. Thirty-two percent mentioned the grammar school age category as approximately the time when they began reading political news in the newspapers, and 29 percent mentioned the after high school age category. These facts are illustrated in table 2 on page 31.

TABLE 1  
PRIMARY GROUPS AS AN AGENT OF SOCIALIZATION

PRIMARY GROUP	PROPORTION MENTIONING PRIMARY GROUP INFLUENCES	
	NORTH CAROLINA SAMPLE=50	
Family members who hold or held political office	40%	N=20
Family members or relatives who have been or are active in politics	58%	N=29
Family members or relatives interested in politics	72%	N=36
Friends or associates who have been or are active in politics, or who are interested in politics	96%	N=48

TABLE 2  
AGE AT WHICH LEGISLATORS BEGAN READING POLITICAL NEWS

TIME CATEGORY	PROPORTION MENTIONING EACH CATEGORY	
	NORTH CAROLINA SAMPLE=50	
Grammar School Age	32%	N=16
High School Age	39%	N=19
After High School Age	<u>29%</u>	<u>N=15</u>
Total	100%	50

Thirty-six percent of the legislators responded that they began discussing politics with friends or relatives at the high school age while 34 percent mentioned the after high school age category. Thirty percent of the legislators from North Carolina mentioned the grammar school age category. The above facts are illustrated in table 3 on page 33.

Another dimension of political socialization examined was the types of participation which possibly resulted in political socialization. Three effective agents of socialization, excluding primary groups, were civic and community work, general political work, and activity in school politics. Other important agents of socialization were party work, activity in occupational and professional groups, and the study of politics in school by self. Less than half of the North Carolina legislators interviewed thought that a politically related job was relevant to their socialization. Activities in ethnic or religious groups were not very important as types of participation which fostered political socialization. The type of participation mentioned least often was legislative lobbying. In fact, one legislator interviewed stated that lobbying was the lowest form of political life. These facts are illustrated in table 4 on page 34.

The last dimension of political socialization examined concerned personal predispositions. The predispositions most effective as agents of political



TABLE 3  
AGE AT WHICH LEGISLATORS BEGAN DISCUSSING POLITICS

TIME CATEGORY	PROPORTION MENTIONING EACH CATEGORY	
	NORTH CAROLINA SAMPLE=50	
Grammar School Age	30%	N=15
High School Age	36%	N=18
After High School Age	<u>34%</u>	<u>N=17</u>
Total	100%	50

TABLE 4  
 TYPES OF PARTICIPATION OF LEGISLATORS  
 AFFECTING POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION

TYPE OF PARTICIPATION	PROPORTION MENTIONING PARTICIPATION	
	NORTH CAROLINA SAMPLE=50	
Activity in School Politics	68%	N=34
Study of Politics in School by Self	50%	N=25
General Political Work [Campaigns, Meetings]	76%	N=38
Party Work	60%	N=30
Civic, Community Work	78%	N=39
Activity in Occupational Professional Groups	54%	N=27
Activity in Ethnic, Religious Groups	26%	N=13
Legislative Lobbying	10%	N= 5
Politically Related Job	42%	N=21

socialization for North Carolina legislators were a general sense of obligation and long interest. Seventy-eight percent of the legislators mentioned a general sense of obligation while 70 percent mentioned long interest. The other types of predispositions were not as important. Twenty-four percent of the North Carolina legislators mentioned admiration for politicians as a personal predisposition affecting political socialization while 20 percent cited a sense of obligation to special groups. Ten percent mentioned ambition for political power as an agent affecting political socialization; 10 percent mentioned a desire for sociability; 2 percent mentioned physical handicaps; and, no one stated that indignation was a personal predisposition affecting political socialization. These facts are illustrated in table 5 on page 36.

### The Hypotheses

It will be recalled that two hypotheses were formulated about North Carolina legislators. One hypothesis was that a majority of North Carolina legislators would have elite political backgrounds. An elite political background was indicated by the following:

[1] a legislator mentioning primary groups as a very important agent in his political socialization; [2] a legislator stating he was politically socialized in grammar school or high school; [3] a legislator citing activity in civic and community work, general political

TABLE 5  
 TYPES OF PREDISPOSITIONS OF LEGISLATORS  
 AFFECTING POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION

TYPES OF PREDISPOSITIONS	PROPORTION MENTIONING PREDISPOSITIONS.	
	NORTH CAROLINA SAMPLE=50	
Long Interest	70%	N=35
Ambition for Political Power	10%	N= 5
Admiration for Politicians	24%	N=12
Indignation	0%	N= 0
General Sense of Obligation	78%	N=39
Sense of Obligation to Special Groups	20%	N=10
Desire for Sociability	10%	N= 5
Physical Handicaps	2%	N= 2

work, school politics, party work, and occupational and professional groups as important agents in his political socialization; and, a legislator describing long interest and a feeling of a general sense of obligation as important factors in his political socialization. As we have seen, the majority of North Carolina legislators were adequately described by this description. Thus, the hypothesis concerning political elitism was correct.

The indicators of elitism were adopted mainly from the work of Lane, Buchanan, Kornberg, Thomas, Hirsch, and Bronfenbrenner whose work suggested that a legislator mentioning one indicator of political elitism would probably mention the other indicators [see pages 17-21]. For instance, the work of Kornberg and Thomas illustrated that a high percentage of legislators who were socialized early in life had fathers with a high-status occupation. Also, these researchers found that the family tended to be the main socializing agent for those who were socialized in childhood. Furthermore, Lane mentioned that higher class status fosters civic responsibility. Thus, one would expect a legislator to cite activity in civic and community work, general political work, party work, and so forth as important agents in his political socialization.

We have explained why North Carolina legislators mentioned certain factors as being significant in their political socialization. However, there were other

factors not mentioned very often. These factors included physical handicaps, desire for sociability, indignation, admiration for politicians, ambition for political power, and legislative lobbying. There is no apparent reason for legislators not having an admiration for politicians. However, it is understandable why legislators did not consider indignation, a desire for sociability, an ambition for political power, and legislative lobbying as significant factors affecting their political socialization. Since most legislators are elites, they are likely to adopt the prevailing values of the society. Therefore, there should be a low amount of indignation among legislators. Regarding ambition for political power, it is not unusual for legislators to deny this ambition although they may desire political power. Legislators do not need politics to satisfy their desire for sociability because many legislators fulfill this need by joining civic and community groups and so forth. Legislative lobbying was described by one legislator as the lowest form of political life. Since North Carolina legislators were elites, they resented outside influence. Obviously, physical handicaps as a type of predisposition affecting political socialization was not mentioned often because of the low number of handicapped legislators.

The second hypothesis of this study was that most North Carolina legislators would perceive themselves to be politicians. The hypothesis was correct. This adds

validity to the assumption that ideological awareness among the electorate is resulting in a shift of representational-role orientations among legislators. It appears that the politico role is replacing the trustee role which Wahlke, Eulau, Buchanan, and Ferguson found to be predominant among legislators over a decade ago. Next, we will compare the finding in The Legislative System: Explorations in Legislative Behavior concerning representational-role orientations and political backgrounds with the North Carolina study.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### A COMPARISON OF THE STUDIES

As we have seen, researchers have demonstrated that variables affecting political socialization are interrelated. The North Carolina study found a relationship between the time and the agent of socialization. Yet, no attempt was made to illustrate that other variables affecting political socialization were interrelated. The lack of these illustrations makes this study parallel to the Wahlke study because he and his colleagues did not emphasize the interrelationship of variables. However, the first subdivision of this chapter will briefly discuss the relationship between the time and the agent of socialization since it should be demonstrated that the interrelation of variables discussed by Kornberg, Thomas, and others are probably true for North Carolina. The second subdivision will examine the similarities between this study and the Wahlke study while the last subdivision will discuss the differences.

#### A Relationship

The study of North Carolina legislators illustrated a definite relationship between the time and the agent of political socialization. A legislator who identified.



primary groups as an important agent in his socialization was probably socialized during grammar school or high school. Thirty-three percent of the North Carolina legislators who identified primary groups as important agents in their socialization were politically socialized in grammar school; 40 percent were socialized during high school; and, 31 percent were socialized after high school. The figures do not equal 100 percent because two indicators were used to determine the time of political socialization. There were some legislators who mentioned one indicator without mentioning the other. To arrive at the percentages, the largest number of legislators mentioning either time period was used.

Although the Wahlke study did not interrelate variables, it is apparent that they assumed factors affecting political socialization were interrelated. This study has been written with that thought under consideration. It is assumed that it is more appropriate in a study attempting to closely parallel the work of Wahlke and his associates not to deviate by specifically illustrating the interrelationship of all variables discussed. The work of Kornberg, Thomas, Bronfenbrenner and others should suffice in suggesting that the variables affecting political socialization are interrelated.

### Similarities

From the information presented in the preceding chapters, it is apparent that a major similarity exists between the study on North Carolina legislators and the study by Wahlke, Eulau, Buchanan, and Ferguson. The similarity concerns the factors affecting a legislator's political socialization. Wahlke and his cohorts discovered that primary groups were important agents of political socialization for legislators in California, New Jersey, Ohio, and Tennessee.<sup>1</sup> The same was true for North Carolina legislators. Fifty-nine percent of the Ohio and Tennessee legislators reported they had relatives in politics while 40 percent of the North Carolina legislators said they had relatives in politics. Sixty-eight percent of the New Jersey legislators and 73 percent of the Ohio legislators reported they had family members or relatives active in politics while 57 percent of the North Carolina legislators mentioned they had family members or relatives active in politics. These figures reaffirm the importance of primary group influences on the political socialization of legislators.

It has been noted that there is a relationship between the agent and the time of political socialization. From the findings presented, it is expected that many legislators from California, New Jersey, Ohio,

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<sup>1</sup>Wahlke, The Legislative System, pp. 82-83.

Tennessee, and North Carolina will be socialized early in life. Wahlke and his associates noted that approximately one-third of the legislators in the four states encompassed by his study mentioned childhood or the grammar school period as the time they became interested in or aware of politics. Altogether, approximately, one-half of the legislators recalled being interested in politics before they attended college.<sup>2</sup> The findings in North Carolina were very similar. Thirty-two percent of the North Carolina legislators mentioned childhood or the grammar school period as the time they became interested in or aware of politics; 39 percent mentioned the adolescence or high school period; and, 29 percent mentioned the after high school period.

The Wahlke study and this study found that certain types of participation and certain personal predispositions of legislators were very important factors in political socialization. General political work, party work, civic work, community work, long interest, and a general sense of obligation were reported as important factors affecting a legislator's political socialization. However, these factors were more evident in North Carolina than in the four states of the Wahlke study. These facts are illustrated in tables 6 and 7 on pages 44 and 45.

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 81.

TABLE 6  
TYPES OF PARTICIPATION AFFECTING POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION

TYPE OF PARTICIPATION	PROPORTION MENTIONING PARTICIPATION				
	Calif. N=78	N.J. N=47	Ohio N=79	Tenn. N=52	N.C. N=50
Activity in School Politics	17%	6%	9%	1%	67%
Study of Politics in School by Self	28%	15%	29%	19%	50%
General Political Work [Campaigns, meetings]	28%	13%	22%	29%	75%
Party Work	17%	53%	22%	15%	60%
Civic, Community Work	15%	13%	11%	19%	78%
Activity in Occupational Professional Groups	12%	6%	13%	1%	53%
Activity in Ethnic, Religious Groups	1%	4%	0%	0%	25%
Legislative Lobbying	0%	0%	0%	0%	10%
Politically-Related Job [Teaching Civics Journalism, Law, Public Job]	12%	6%	6%	15%	42%

TABLE 7  
TYPES OF PREDISPOSITIONS AFFECTING POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION

TYPE OF PREDISPOSITION	PROPORTION MENTIONING PREDISPOSITIONS				
	Calif. N=59	N.J. N=42	Ohio N=84	Tenn. N=39	N.C. N=50
Long Interest	25%	45%	63%	72%	71%
Ambition for Political Power	5%	12%	5%	10%	10%
Admiration for Polit- icians	36%	5%	10%	5%	25%
Indignation	17%	14%	10%	5%	0%
General Sense of Obligation	29%	10%	16%	3%	78%
Sense of Obligation to Special Groups	5%	12%	1%	3%	21%
Desire for Sociability	3%	10%	2%	5%	9%
Physical Handicaps	2%	0%	1%	3%	3%

The reason that many North Carolina legislators mentioned personal predispositions and certain types of participation was explained by Daniel Elazar in American Federalism: A View from the States. According to Elazar, North Carolina has a traditionalist political culture. He stated that a culture of this nature fosters elitism among representatives, and it confines political power to a small and self-perpetuating group.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that this group perpetuates itself through general political work, party work, and so forth. This becomes more apparent when one considers that North Carolina is less urban, less industrialized, and less wealthy than many other states. Also, it has a relatively low rate of political participation.<sup>4</sup>

### Differences

In a state with a relatively low rate of political participation, one might expect the trustee representational-role orientation to be predominant and the delegate role to be adopted least often. It will be recalled that the findings in The Legislative System: Explorations in Legislative Behavior reported that the trustee role was predominant. In California, 55 percent of the legislators interviewed were trustees; 25 percent

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<sup>3</sup>Daniel Elazar, American Federalism: A View from the States [New York: Crowell, 1966], p. 93.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

were politicos; and, 20 percent were delegates. In New Jersey, 61 percent of the legislators were trustees; 22 percent were politicos; and, 17 percent were delegates. In Ohio, 56 percent of the legislators were trustees; 29 percent were politicos; and, 15 percent were delegates. In Tennessee, 81 percent of the legislators were trustees, 13 percent were politicos; and, 6 percent were delegates.

In North Carolina, the delegate role was the least often adopted with only 10 percent of the legislators adopting it. However, a major difference was found between North Carolina legislators and the legislators of the Wahlke study. Contrary to the Wahlke study, it was discovered that most legislators were not trustees but were politicos. Fifty percent of the North Carolina legislators were politicos; 40 percent were trustees; and 10 percent were delegates.

In summary, both the Wahlke study and this study illustrated the importance of primary groups as agents of political socialization and also revealed that many legislators were socialized early in life. Also, both studies mentioned that long interest, among other factors, was a type of personal predisposition which acted as an effective agent of political socialization.

As we have seen, the politico role was adopted most often by legislators in North Carolina. A very large number of these politicos played their role serially. In essence, the legislators acted as delegates

on local matters and as trustees on matters affecting the entire state. However, this does not minimize the importance of the politico role being found more often than the trustee role. This is especially true for North Carolina since it has a traditionalist political culture and traditionally low political participation.

Recent research on voting behavior sheds light on why most North Carolina legislators were politicos. The implications of this research and the implications of a shift in representational-role orientations will be discussed in the following chapter.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### IMPLICATIONS FOR DEMOCRATIC THEORY

The predominance of politicians in North Carolina along with recent voting behavior research has short-range and long-range implications for democratic theory. The possibilities of a polarization of the electorate and the demise of the two-party system in the United States are long-range implications. They will be discussed in two subdivisions later in the chapter. In a third subdivision, the views of Thomas Jefferson, an early democratic theorist, on ideologues will be examined.

The first subdivision will explore the short-range implications of recent voting behavior research and the implications of the North Carolina study as they relate to three models of political linkage. Research on voting behavior is arriving at new conclusions concerning ideological awareness among the electorate. Early voting studies found that most voters had vague notions about policies advocated by candidates and often voted according to party identification. However, the party did not necessarily support the voters policy preferences. Yet, the model of policy linkage theorizing that political parties link voters and representatives with regards to

policy preferences is based on the assumption that an individual chooses a party as a rational act after considering which party most closely reflects his personal preferences.<sup>1</sup> Voting research illustrates that the political parties model has not operated very effectively in the past because voters do not always identify with a party that does this.

Two other models of political linkage are the sharing model and the electoral accountability model. These models along with the political parties model will be viewed in light of an increased ideological awareness among voters.

### Three Models of Political Linkage

One of the implications of the North Carolina study is that the sharing model of policy linkage will be rendered obsolete by the electoral accountability model and the political parties model. However, this will not occur immediately. For instance, David R. Morgan reported that recent research in the San Francisco Bay area found the electoral accountability model hardly operated in the urban political process. Instead, many city council members followed their conscience in decision-making behavior without concern for voter retaliation and exhibited almost open disdain for the

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<sup>1</sup>Norman R. Luttbeg, ed., Public Opinion and Public Policy: Models of Political Linkage [Homewood, Illinois: The Dorsey Press, 1968], p.5.

will of the majority. Yet, the research offered no evidence that city councilmen made policies out of harmony with local desires and needs.<sup>2</sup> Possibly, a belief-sharing model was operating in the San Francisco Bay area. This model assumes that a congruence exists between representatives' and voters' policy preferences.

However, the North Carolina study along with voting behavior research imply that the electoral accountability model and the political parties model will increase in significance. Recent democratic-theorist have begun to increasingly accept these models. The electoral accountability model states that representatives are responsive to members of the electorate because of the ballot box. V. O. Key has suggested that public opinion forms dikes which hold leaders within certain limits as they formulate policy.<sup>3</sup> In the past, the electoral accountability model may not have operated much beyond forming dikes. However, the North Carolina study suggests voters are becoming more ideologically aware and, as a consequence, will be capable in the future of doing much more than merely forming opinion dikes. It was previously stated that voters who are ideologues will probably pressure representatives to forego the trustee

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<sup>2</sup>David R. Morgan, "Attitudinal Congruence Between Citizens and Officials," The Western Political Quarterly, Vol. XXVI, No. 2, June, 1973, p. 209.

<sup>3</sup>V. O. Key, Jr., Public Opinion and American Democracy [New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961], p. 552.



role. In the future, evidence suggests that voters will choose a political party as a result of a rational act and will vote for candidates who support their policy preferences.

For instance, North Carolina is a state where some voters appear to be choosing parties and candidates according to a rational act. This state is predominantly a one party state. Yet, during the 1960's, some North Carolina Democrats switched their allegiance to the Republican Party. The Democratic Party had become too liberal on domestic issues for these people. Moreover, although the Democratic Party remained the most powerful party in North Carolina, the state cast 72 percent of its vote for Richard Nixon in the 1972 election. In 1976, Ronald Reagan, an issue-oriented candidate, defeated Gerald Ford in the North Carolina Republican primary.

A post-election survey by the University of North Carolina School of Journalism revealed that Ronald Reagan's victory in North Carolina's presidential primary was the result of strong support from middle-aged, white voters who had better than average education. As a result of a higher level of education, Reagan voters had better knowledge of issues in the campaign. Fifty-four percent of those polled who voted for Reagan said they did so because of his policies and abilities. Reagan voters placed heavy emphasis on defense spending and detente. Also, Reagan received a large percentage of his votes from whites who

demonstrated concern for social issues such as conduct of government officials, busing, and welfare.<sup>4</sup>

The evidence just mentioned indicates that the political parties model and the electoral accountability model are increasing in significance in North Carolina. However, the changes in ideological awareness among the electorate are gradual. Voters will not swiftly become ideologues. Instead, the small subset of "purpose voters" described earlier in this study are expected to slowly increase in membership. Nevertheless, the trend of ideological voting possibly indicates the beginning of the end for North Carolina's traditionalist political culture. The real political power in North Carolina possibly will not continue to reside in a small and self-perpetuating group, but it may be transferred to the majority of the people. If a substantial number of the electorate become ideologues, representatives probably will be pressured to forego the politico role for the delegate role.

#### Polarization of the Electorate

If trends found among North Carolina voters are valid for the nation, and, it appears they are, ideologues can be expected to be members of a conservative camp or a liberal camp. The issues dividing the camps will probably be domestic in nature. The

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<sup>4</sup>Sarah E. Holeman, "Reagan's Win in State Is Analyzed," Henderson Daily Dispatch, 5 April 1976, p. 10.

conservative camp will oppose the growing strength of the federal government while the liberals will favor national health programs, federal housing, federal control of education, and so forth. As the two camps vie for power, the United States will experience a turbulent political era.

The turbulence should be tempered by an increased agreement on democratic values and procedures among the politically articulate. For instance, Robert A. Dahl studied community decision-makers and concluded that political stability depended only upon acceptance of democratic norms and procedures.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the nation should survive an era of turbulence and advance to an era of factionalism.

### Factionalism in the United States

In the distant future, most Americans possibly will be ideologues. Since many divergent views can be expected from such a group, it is reasonable to expect that consensus on specific policy issues will not be present. The lack of consensus will create factionalism which will result in the demise of the two-party system in the United States. Voters will be even more politically sophisticated than they were during the preceding era of political turbulence. They will be capable of perceiving very slight differences in issue

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<sup>5</sup>Robert A. Dahl, Who Governs [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967], p. 314.

stances of a party or of a candidate. Each member of the electorate will carefully choose a party whose platform coincides with his views. A large political party would be incapable of adopting a platform that would please a large number of ideologues. Hence, large political parties will be replaced by many small parties.

### Jefferson's Vision of Political Evolution

The idea of a nation of ideologues is probably frightening to those contemporary democratic theorist who equate consensus with stability. However, Thomas Jefferson, an earlier theorist, apparently envisioned a gradual increase of political awareness among people that would end when they became ideologues. This study has termed such a development as a "political evolution." Jefferson thought that the process of "political evolution" depended upon education. He said that if the people are lacking in the attributes necessary for self-government the remedy is not to take the government from them, but it is to educate them.<sup>6</sup> Jefferson thought of education as the means of producing ideologues.

Recent public opinion research supports Jefferson's faith in education as the means of creating a "political man," ie., an ideologue. For example, education has been strongly correlated with political efficacy. The

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<sup>6</sup>Gordon C. Lee, ed., Crusade Against Ignorance: Thomas Jefferson on Education [New York: Teachers College Press, 1967], pp. 17-18.

person who believes that he can be effective in his dealings with government is said to be "politically efficacious." The effect of education on political efficacy is shown by a poll reporting that 77 percent of citizens with no formal education agree that public officials do not care what they think. On the other hand, only 10 percent of those who completed college agree that public officials are uncaring about their views. According to many democratic theorists, democracy works best when citizens believe they have a voice in their government.<sup>7</sup>

In summary, the chapter has presented three implications for democratic theory. A short-range implication is that the electoral accountability model and the political parties model will grow more important in explaining policy linkage while the belief-sharing model will gradually become obsolete. A second implication is that the nation will become politically polarized. This polarization should be tempered by an increased acceptance of democratic norms and procedures. A third implication suggests that the process of "political evolution" will cause the disappearance of the two-party system in the United States.

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<sup>7</sup>Robert S. Erikson and Norman R. Luttbeg, American Public Opinion: Its Origins, Content, and Impact [New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1973], pp. 105-106.



## CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

The study has revealed that a majority of North Carolina legislators are politicos and have elite political backgrounds. According to Daniel Elazar, this is not an expected finding because North Carolina has a traditionalist political culture.<sup>1</sup> In such a culture, the trustee role is expected to be predominant. It was suggested that an increase in ideological awareness among some members of the electorate caused North Carolina legislators to forego the trustee role for the politico role. Hence, the predominance of the politico role in North Carolina should not be misconstrued to suggest that there is not a relation between an elite political background and the adoption of the trustee role. Instead, the implication is that more political elites are, perhaps, unwillingly adopting the politico role.

Considering the information just presented, it appears that an underlying assumption of this study stating the perceived representational-role orientation of a majority of state legislators is related to an elite political background is correct. For example,

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<sup>1</sup>Elazar, American Federalism, p. 93.

in North Carolina 45 percent of the legislators interviewed who had family members that held or hold political office were trustees and 35 percent were politicos. It will be recalled that primary group influences were considered as indicators of political elitism.

A second assumption mentioned earlier in this study was that the book entitled The Legislative System: Explorations in Legislative Behavior was time-bound. The 1964 presidential campaign has been described as a critical election. It initiated a political era in the United States distinguished by an increased voter awareness of policy issues. The Wahlke book was published before this happened.

The third assumption of this study was that voting behavior research is time-bound. Democratic theorist who reported the American voter was non-ideological must re-assess their conclusions. More recent research clearly shows that voters are becoming more ideological. The change will be gradual but profound.

One of the changes will be the electoral accountability model and the political parties model replacing the belief-sharing model as adequate explanations of policy linkage between constituents and representatives. At the present time, "purposive voters" comprise a small subset of the electorate. They are generally people of high socioeconomic status and have backgrounds similar to representatives. This often results in a similarity of policy views. Hence, the

belief-sharing model acts as an adequate model of linkage for "purposive voters." However, this will probably not be true if many voters become ideological. A large number of ideologues are unlikely to have harmonious views with their representatives on all policy issues.

Ideological voters choosing a political party as a rational act, ie., because of the parties stances on issues, will probably cause a polarization of the electorate in the United States. Polarization can be viewed as a step in the process of "political evolution" envisioned by Thomas Jefferson. The term, "political evolution," was not used by Jefferson but has been applied in this study to Jefferson's hope for an increase in political awareness among the populace. Education has been identified as the agent primarily responsible for an increase in ideological awareness. For example, the voters in North Carolina who favored Ronald Reagan, an issue-oriented candidate, in the 1976 presidential primary were highly educated.

Political polarization will possibly be followed by the demise of the two-party system. Two parties will not be capable of satisfying the specific policy preferences of voters with widely differing views. Yet, the factionalism envisioned in this study does not mean the United States will not survive. Instead, political articulates are expected to share a belief in the superiority of democratic norms. This belief will allow the existence of democracy in a polarized society.

In conclusion, it should be admitted that unforeseen occurrences could radically alter the implications for this nation suggested by an increase in ideological voting. Since the shift to ideological voting is expected to be very gradual, there will be ample time for historical forces to render the long-range implications of polarization and the demise of the two-party system as inaccurate. However, the United States is apparently embarking on a course of "political evolution" from which a "political man" should emerge.

# APPENDIX

## QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Do you have relatives or members in your immediate family, ie., father, mother, sister, brother; who have held political office? yes no

2. Do you have relatives or members in your immediate family who have been or are active in politics? yes no

3. Do you have relatives or members in your immediate family who are interested in politics? yes no

4. Do you have friends or associates who are or have been active in politics, or who are interested in politics? yes no

5. Approximately, what age do you believe you were when you began reading political news in the newspapers? grammar school age high school age after high school age

6. What age do you believe you were when you began discussing politics with friends or relatives? grammar school age high school age after high school age

7. Check any of the following which contributed to you acquiring political interest:

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| 1. Activity in school politics                   | _____ |
| 2. Study of politics in school by self           | _____ |
| 3. General political work (campaigns, meetings)  | _____ |
| 4. Party work                                    | _____ |
| 5. Civic, community work                         | _____ |
| 6. Activity in occupational, professional groups | _____ |

- 7. Activity in ethnic, religious groups \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. Legislative lobbying \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. Politically-related job (teaching civics, journalism, law, public job) \_\_\_\_\_

8. Check any of the following types of predispositions which contributed to your participation and concern with politics:

- 1. "Long interest" \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Ambition for political power \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Admiration for politicians \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Indignation \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. General sense of obligation \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. Sense of obligation to special groups \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. Desire for sociability \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. Physical handicaps \_\_\_\_\_

9. How would you describe the job of being a legislator—what are the most important things you do as a legislator?

10. Are there any important differences between what you think this job is and the way your constituents see it?

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## VITA

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